
Government of the District of Columbia



**Office of the Deputy Mayor for
Public Safety and Justice**

Testimony of
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Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice

***Public Oversight Hearing on "Effective Youth
Development: A Strategy to Ensure District Youth Grow
Up Problem-Free, Fully Prepared, and Fully Engaged"***

Special Committee on the Prevention of Youth Violent Crime
The Honorable Vincent C. Gray, Chair
Council of the District of Columbia

January 25, 2006

Room 500
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004
11:00 A.M.

Good afternoon Chairperson Gray and members of the Special Committee on the Prevention of Youth Violent Crime. I am Edward Reiskin, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice. I appreciate this opportunity today to update the committee the Administration's progress towards implementing the Mayor's Effective Youth Development Strategy. Having entered the implementation phase for the short-term initiatives, I would like to again thank the Chair for bringing together public witnesses from Baltimore and the National League of Cities at the previous hearing to share information that has proven to be instrumental in our own program development. And as you just heard from Deputy Mayor Donald Walker's testimony, our offices have had some initial successes in transitioning from the philosophical foundations of the strategy to an operational focus on management of the short-term initiatives since we appeared before this committee last month. Still, we know that our work is far from done.

My testimony this afternoon will briefly cover the management structure that we have created to direct the work of District agencies driving the strategy and to achieve the outcomes detailed in the implementation plan submitted to the committee on December 24, 2005. I will also highlight our work on several of the strategy's immediate violence intervention initiatives as outlined in the Safety First! action plans.

But first, as I have done at the last two hearings, I would like to enter into the record the most recent indicators at our disposal on juvenile homicide and youth violence. Since the last hearing, we ended 2005 with 12 juvenile homicides, down from 24 in 2004 – a 50% decrease in the number of young people murdered in the District. To date in 2006, there has been one juvenile homicide. As we had hoped, the 24 juvenile homicides that occurred in 2004 were not a sign of a broader trend, especially when viewed against the numbers from 2003 and 2002 when there were 12 and 13 juvenile homicides respectively. Even so, through this strategy and many other efforts we continue to work towards our goal of zero juvenile homicides.

And as we work towards the goal of zero juvenile homicides, we continue to examine the nature and extent of the problem of juvenile violence from every angle:

- The number of young people dying from guns has similarly dropped 50% from 2004 to 2005.
- The number of children who died at the hands of a family member or caregiver continues to be a problem – five deaths (21%) in 2004 and three (25%) in 2005.
- In terms of age, the largest number of juvenile homicide victims in 2004 and 2005 continue to be of 16 or 17 years of age (see table below); there were 12 (50%) in this age group killed in 2004 and eight (67%) in 2005.

Year	Under 10	13-15	16-17
2004	6	6	12
2005	4	0	8
2006	0	0	1

- By gender, nine (38%) of the 24 juvenile homicide victims in 2004 were female. In 2005, only two of the 12 (17%) victims were female.
- In terms of location, the Seventh District had the most number of juvenile homicides in both 2004 and 2005 (see table below), with nine and six murders respectively.

District	2004	2005	2006
1D	2	1	0
2D	0	0	0
3D	1	2	0
4D	3	0	0
5D	5	0	0
6D	4	3	0
7D	9	6	1

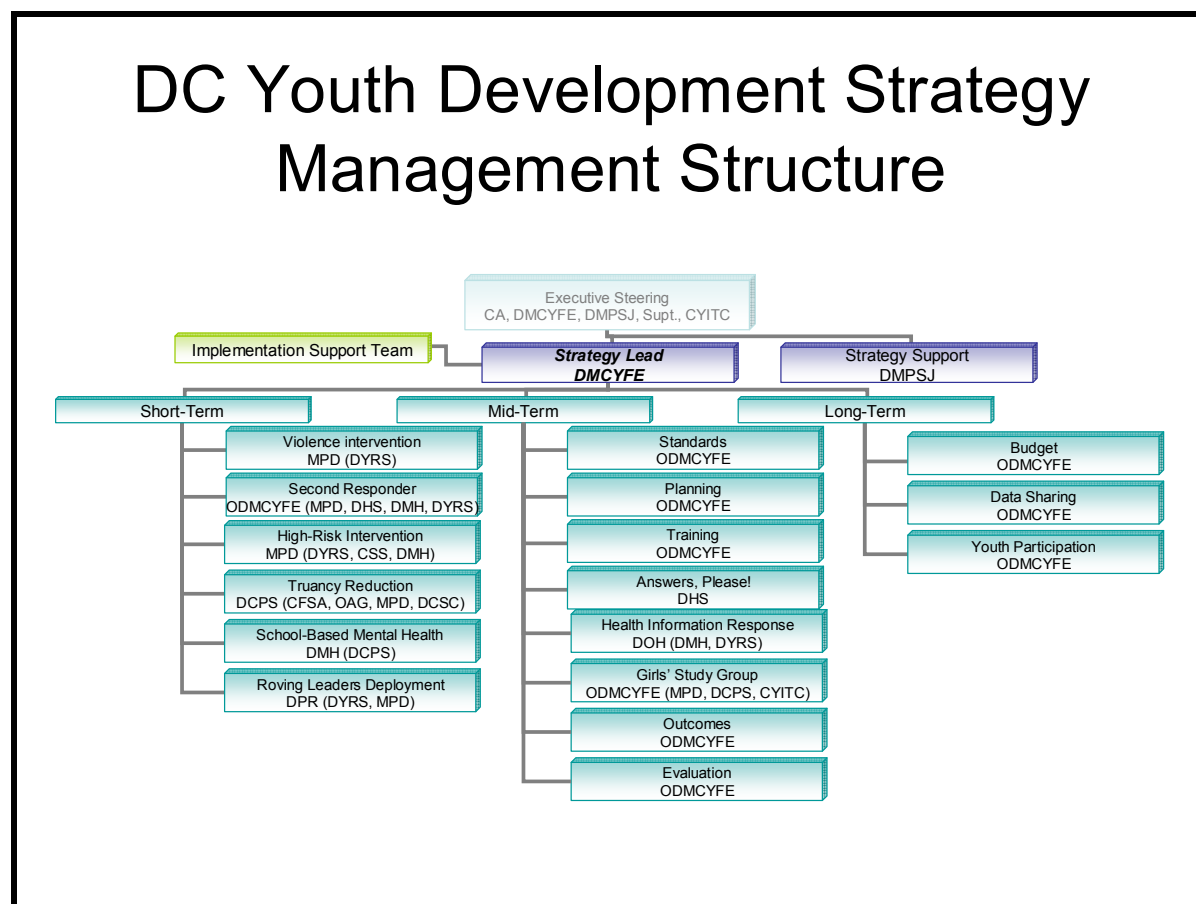
And, of course, we use other tools to measure youth violence and the success of our youth violence reduction efforts. MPD's prevention strategy emphasizes the enforcement of "gateway" crimes, such as juvenile car theft, curfew violations, and truancy, as a means of intervening early to prevent more serious juvenile crime. While arrests were down slightly in 2005, the numbers of juvenile arrests, truants, and curfew violators are still quite high (see table below). Of all the crimes for which juveniles were arrested in 2005, perhaps the least encouraging trend was a 37% increase in the number of juveniles arrested for robbery between 2004 and 2005.

Category	2004	2005	2006 YTD
Arrests	2,958	2,928	84
Arrests for Unauthorized Use of Vehicle ¹	542	500	14
Custody Orders	570	532	10
Truancy Violations	3,072	2,840	69
Curfew Violations	1,227	3,271	85

These indicators paint an important picture of youth violence and crime in our city. But the real story is told by our friends and neighbors, and by our young people that are touched by this violence. As you know, Deputy Mayor Donald Walker and I came together in October with representatives from our cluster agencies, the schools, and our federal and community partners under these two premises: 1) that there is a relatively small number of kids that need a relatively high level of attention and 2) that the government alone is incapable of reaching and staying with all of them. As a result of interagency and community collaboration, we developed six short-term violence intervention initiatives called Safety First! to positively engage these hardest-to-reach kids who are caught up in a lifestyle of violence.

¹ Though the number of juvenile arrests for UUV decreased 8 percent in 2005, the number of stolen autos has decreased 16 percent over the same time period, indicating MPD's vigorous enforcement of this juvenile gateway crime.

The lead agencies for these short-term initiatives, as well as for the mid- and long-term initiatives, were identified in the implementation plan submitted to the committee last month. As shown by the management structure below, Deputy Mayor Donald Walker will serve as the Strategy Lead and will be responsible for directing the work of agencies from her cluster assigned to the different initiatives. I will support the strategy development and implementation by directing the work of the public safety agencies. An Executive Steering Committee comprised by the City Administrator, the Superintendent, the President of the Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation, Deputy Mayor Donald Walker and I will provide overall strategy oversight, policy development, and resource allocation.



In action plans also submitted to the committee last month, outcomes, performance measures, implementation milestones, stakeholders, initiatives champions, oversight responsibilities, management structure, budget, and fiscal sources were identified for each of the Safety First! initiatives. I will touch on several of these focused intervention initiatives today, as they rely significantly on the energies of public safety officials and for which I exercise direct oversight and am accountable.

The Partnership for Success is a collaboration between MPD, DYRS, Court Social Services, and community-based outreach workers to apply one-on-one intensive support to a cohort of our

highest risk youth who pose the greatest risk to public safety and/or who may be at risk for retaliatory violence. The cohort will be made up of approximately 50 kids who are likely targets or perpetrators of violence primarily chosen from either 1) youth released from Oak Hill or transitioning to community-based placements or 2) youth under the supervision of Court Social Services. The Partnership's initiative champion, Assistant Chief Gerald Wilson, has been working with his implementation partners at DYRS, Court Social Services, and the Alliance of Concerned Men and Peaceoholics to finalize standard operating procedures and criteria for the selection of the first cohort and to collect vital information on the kids who will be chosen for involvement in the program.

We are finalizing the process this week and next so that we will be up and running by the end of January as committed to at last month's hearing. Additionally, the process has revealed a noteworthy opportunity to streamline management for this complex, interagency collaboration with a separate, but similar initiative. The targeted redeployment of Roving Leaders in the Petworth area of Ward Four, the Safety First! initiative championed by Roslyn Johnson of DPR, includes many of the same District agency and community partners as the Partnership for Success, but is focused on young people that, while at-risk of being victims or perpetrators of violence, are not yet part of the juvenile justice system.

Therefore, to maximize the focus of our efforts and to minimize duplication, I will oversee both of these initiatives as one program with two separate tracks: one for the court-involved youth (the Partnership for Success) and one for non-court-involved youth (the targeted redeployment of Roving Leaders). A single working group of the stakeholders will meet weekly to confidentially share information on individual kids who are part of the program. Performance of the program will be monitored at regular monthly meetings of a steering committee led by me. These meetings will be data-driven and focused on each young person individually to ensure that each kid's specific situations are addressed, rather than on a summary level in which the intensity of our focused intervention efforts would be lost.

While the specific interventions will vary between the two cohorts of kids, this alignment of responsibilities and oversight was chosen because both initiatives share common processes such as the identification and initial assessment of the youth selected, staff training, youth and family orientation, need for access to the same services, data collection, and outcomes and evaluation. Like the interventions, some of the measures by which we will evaluate the success of the initiatives will be different, but both initiatives will share a single outcome of reducing youth violent crime by engaging individual kids and putting them on a productive path. In doing so, we will track the number of youth homicides, the number of youth linked to employment, the school attendance and academic performance of the selected youth, the number of youths arrested and the type of offense, the number of older youth participating at recreation centers, and the anticipated percentage reduction in homicides, juvenile homicides, robberies, thefts from auto, and auto thefts in the citywide and in the targeted neighborhoods.

The additional Safety First! initiative for which I would like to provide an update is the Violence Intervention Partnership (VIP) in Wards 7 and 8 modeled after the highly successful Columbia Heights/Shaw Weed & Seed Gang Intervention Partnership (GIP). As I testified last month, the

VIP is led by initiative champion and Assistant Chief Willie Dandridge from MPD and includes both federal and community partners such as Rev. Isaac from the East of the River Clergy Police Community Partnership and Albert Herring from the U.S. Attorney's Office. The VIP aims to reduce violence among at-risk youth and young adults ages 15 to 25 years old through innovative law enforcement, conflict resolution, grass roots mediation and prevention strategies.

In its first phase, the VIP Unit has been conducting focused law enforcement activities and daily patrols in targeted areas of the Sixth (6D) and Seventh (7D) Police Districts. Information is being compiled and analyzed by the unit every day with a special focus on the elimination of drug and nuisance crimes in PSAs 704 and 601. The VIP Unit is coordinating with the Focused Mission Units and Robbery Squads in 6D and 7D, as well as the CORE teams and property managers from Wards 7 and 8 to make quality of life improvements. To date, the VIP Unit has made almost 20 arrests, mostly for possession of marijuana or PCP with the intent to distribute, served numerous warrants, and conducted several observation posts and over 10 drug "buys." MPD reports that there have been no homicides in the targeted areas since the VIP Unit was established.

Following the "weeding" phase, the VIP will primarily engage youth or young adults that are involved in a gang or crew or affiliated with a gang or crew member through enhanced supervision and case management. The VIP Unit and its community partners will conduct an initial comprehensive needs assessment followed by individual, family, and group counseling including connection to social services, training, and employment. Like the Partnership for Success, the VIP will meet weekly to confidentially exchange information on individual kids so that the focus remains intensive throughout his or her participation.

Consistent with the milestones in the VIP action plan submitted to the committee last month, members of the VIP have been developing protocols, procedures, and policy documents specifying community and law enforcement roles and will meet this week to make final changes. MPD's VIP Unit, which consists of nine officers and a sergeant operating jointly out of ROC-East, has been staffed and operational for over a month now and core VIP members are on board. Orientation and the format for management team meetings and stakeholder training opportunities are agenda items for this week's VIP meeting. A formal progress review of the VIP will be conducted in May.

In closing, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today to discuss the Administration's progress in implementing the Mayor's Effective Youth Development Strategy. As you can see, this is a challenging endeavor that we are committed to getting right. I am available for any questions that you may have.